AFRICAN VIOLET

African violet, *Saintpaulia ionantha*, was introduced to the United States in the 1890s and quickly became one of the most popular houseplants in the world. Thousands of varieties are available in both single and double flowering forms in shades of white, pink, blue, purple, red, and bicolors.

African Violets can grow to a mature size of 4 to 8 inches high by up to 8 inches or more across. Miniature varieties can be half that size. Plants should be grown in a good quality potting soil in a pot with adequate drainage holes. African Violets require a location that receives bright light with little to no direct sunlight and average indoor room temperatures.

It is important that cold water does not touch African violet leaves because they spot easily. This can be avoided by placing the pots in shallow containers of water to allow the soil to absorb the water through the bottom drainage holes. After approximately 20 minutes, remove the pots from the water and allow them to drain thoroughly before returning them to their saucers.

During the growing season of March to November, apply a balanced fertilizer (e.g., 10-10-10, 20-20-20) approximately every two to four weeks. African Violets will continue to bloom year-round if they are given optimal growing conditions, with short rest periods between bloom cycles. When plants have finished blooming, remove dead flowers and stems to make the plants more aesthetically pleasing and to encourage them to rebloom.

Plants can be transplanted to a larger pot every year if the roots become potbound. Divide the plants at this time, if necessary. Plants can be propagated by division, leaf cuttings, or by seed. For detailed propagation methods, refer to the *Vegetative Propagation of Houseplants* Fact Sheet.

Please contact Plant Information Service at (847) 835-0972 or plantinfo@chicagobotanic.org for more information.